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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1027

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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [CA](#)
SUBJECT: GUILTY PLEA IN TORONTO TERROR CASE

REF: A. Ottawa 198
- B. 08 Toronto 286
- C. 08 Toronto 114

¶1. (SBU) Summary: One of the so-called "Toronto 18" alleged terror plot to attack federal targets in Ontario in 2006 pled guilty on May 4 to one count of participating in a terrorist activity. Along with the earlier conviction of another defendant in this case as well as the conviction under Canada's 2001 Anti-terrorism Law of a defendant in another case (ref a), Canada is making progress in the successful prosecution of terrorists. End summary.

¶2. (U) Canadian authorities arrested eighteen individuals (fourteen adults and four youths) in June 2006 in an alleged terror plot to attack targets in Ontario. Police subsequently stayed charges against three youths and four adults in this case (ref c). The court convicted one youth (whose identity is protected under Canadian laws) in September 2008 of participating in a terrorist activity (ref b); he will face sentencing on May 22. Authorities expect the trials of nine other adult males in the case to begin in ¶2010.

¶3. (U) On May 4, twenty-two year old Saad Khalid surprised the media and well wishers by pleading guilty in an Ontario court to one count of participating in a terrorist organization "with the intention of causing an explosion or explosions that were likely to cause serious bodily harm or death." The charge carries a maximum penalty of ten years imprisonment. Khalid also faces two other charges of knowingly participating in a terrorist group and receiving training for the purpose of enhancing the ability of a terrorist group. However, his lawyer said on May 5 that he believes that the Crown will withdraw these charges. He also explained that Khalid's guilty plea resulted from negotiations with Crown prosecutors, adding that it will be "up to them" to decide whether to call Khalid as a witness in the cases against the remaining nine adults.

¶4. (U) The Court has scheduled a sentencing hearing for Khalid for June 22. Details of the case are still subject to a publication ban to avoid tainting the trials of remaining defendants.

¶5. (SBU) Comment: Canada continues vigorously to pursue prosecutions of suspected terrorists, leading so far to three convictions in two different cases. However, the very deliberate pace of the judicial proceedings -- across the board -- continues to disappoint many observers.
BREESE